

ask observers not only in the field but also those with access to other collections, to see if they can obtain corroborative evidence.

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9. DAMAGE TO MAIZE CROP BY ROSERINGED
PARAKEET, *PSITTACULA KRAMERI* (SCOPOLI)
IN THE PUNJAB

(With a photograph)

INTRODUCTION

Damage by birds to crops and fruits is not a new problem and references to their damage have been listed periodically in the last five centuries. The Roseringed Parakeet has been reported to be very destructive to crops and ripening fruits thus reducing subsequent yields. It eats by gnawing, thus wasting far more than what it actually eats (Whistler 1949 ; Lamba 1952 ; Ali 1964 and Ali & Futehally 1967). Taking into consideration its destructiveness to crops and fruits the present studies were undertaken to evaluate the extent of damage to maize crop.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

To evaluate the extent of damage to maize crop by parakeets, a plot having a total area of 1.5 acres was selected at the Punjab Agricultural University Farm, Ludhiana. The data were recorded on ten rows selected at random when the grains were set in the cobs. The damaged cobs were graded on the basis of the amount of damage done as fully damaged, $\frac{3}{4}$ damaged, $\frac{1}{2}$ damaged, $\frac{1}{4}$ damaged and $\frac{1}{8}$ damaged. Total number of fully damaged cobs were calculated by summing up the damage done to all cobs put together. The percentage of loss to the grains on cob basis was then worked out.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

On an average, there were 60.7 cobs per line, each having 39.2 un-attacked cobs. Maximum damage was observed in the form of

$\frac{1}{2}$ damaged followed by $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{8}$ (see photograph). The damage in the form of $\frac{3}{4}$ was the least and no cob was found fully damaged (Table 1).

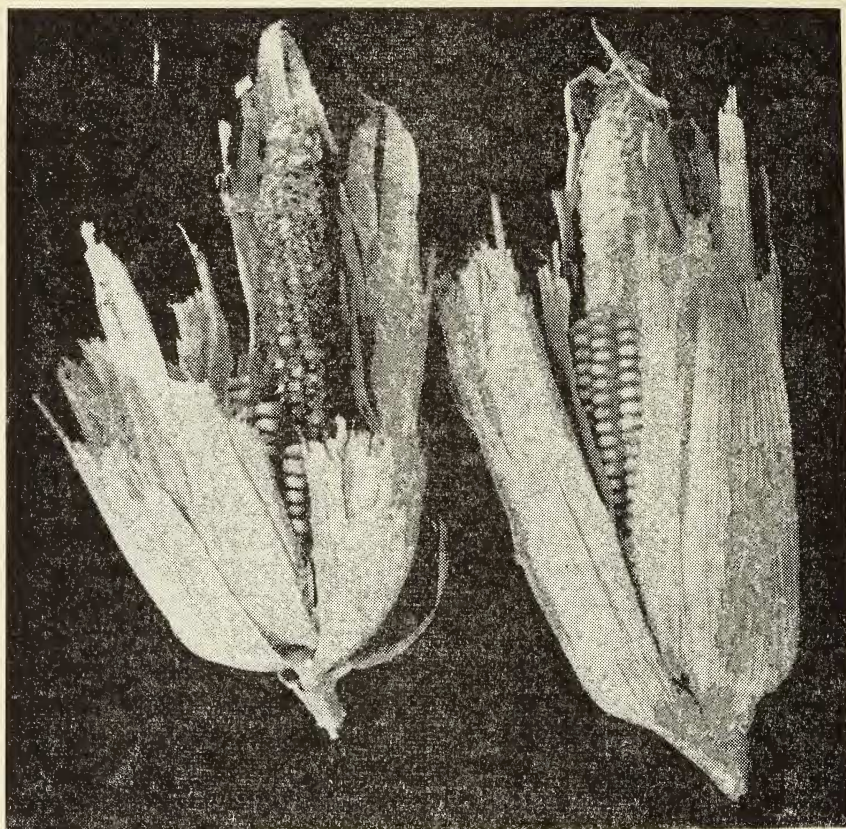


TABLE 1

INCIDENCE OF DAMAGE TO MAIZE COBS BY PARAKEET

Row No.	No. of cobs with different amount of damage					Total
	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	Nil	
1	2	10	10	2	37	61
2	4	11	5	5	38	63
3	3	4	6	8	46	67
4	3	5	2	9	36	55
5	2	7	5	7	32	53
6	2	5	6	5	40	58
7	1	9	5	7	40	62
8	3	5	12	4	37	61
9	2	7	5	5	47	66
10	1	8	7	6	39	61
Average	2.3	7.1	6.3	5.8	39.2	60.7

Per cent loss to maize crop on cob basis was also worked out and is given in Table 2.

TABLE 2
PER CENT LOSS TO MAIZE BY PARAKEET

Row No.	Total No. of cobs	Loss as damaged cobs*	Per cent loss
1	61	9.2	15.1
2	63	10.4	16.5
3	67	6.7	10.1
4	55	6.4	11.5
5	53	7.1	13.4
6	58	6.1	10.5
7	62	7.4	11.8
8	61	8.2	13.2
9	66	6.9	10.4
10	61	7.2	11.9
Average			12.4

* Obtained by adding figures $\frac{3}{4}$ of column 2, $\frac{1}{2}$ of column 3, $\frac{1}{4}$ of column 4 and $\frac{1}{8}$ of column 5 of Table 1.

The data presented in Table 2 reveal that the percentage of loss to maize crop varied from 10.1 to 16.5, average being 12.4 per cent. However, Sekhon (1966) recorded on an average 20.6% loss to maize crop due to Roseringed Parakeet. His observations were based on just three rows of plants in a field. Whistler (1949) reported that it feeds bit by bit and causes damage in the gardens and fields. Ali (1964) and Ali & Futehally (1967) mentioned it to be a serious pest to the farmers and fruit growers, causing enormous losses to their standing crops and ripening fruits by gnawing at and wasting far more than it actually eats.

On the basis of the present study it may be concluded that the Rose-ringed Parakeet causes considerable loss to maize crop and warrants control.

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10. SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNAL ROOSTING IN THE COMMON MYNA [*ACRIDOTHERES TRISTIS* (LINN.)]

Although some species roost alone, in pairs or small groups, there are numerous cases in which hundreds or thousands of birds gather at a communal roosting place both during and after the breeding season. Yet till recently very little attention has been paid to explaining the function of this phenomenon in bird life. This paper summarises the result of relevant observations on the Common Myna.

The Common Myna, a black-headed vinous-brown bird about 18 cm long, is one of the most familiar species in India. It occurs in close association with man and can be found wherever man normally lives, except in high mountains, sandy desert and dense forest. It is basically an insectivorous bird but due to its association with man it is omnivorous. It roosts communally on trees in enormous flocks throughout the year.

Berhampore, a district town, is situated on the eastern side of the Bhagirathi river in the midlands of West Bengal. The eastern bank of the river is lined for about half a mile with double rows of densely growing heavily spinous babul (*Acacia arabica*) trees. A large number of tall trees like sisu (*Dalbergia sissoo*), mango (*Mangifera indica*), banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*) and peepal (*Ficus religiosa*), etc. are scattered all over the town. During the course of my study on the life of the Common Myna (Sengupta, 1969, *Proc. Zool. Soc. Calcutta* 22: 129-137) I found that the babul trees formed the only roosting place of the Common Myna in Berhampore (area: ten square miles) although many other suitable roosting trees were abundant. As the shadow lengthened, party after party arrived from all directions and settled for the night to the accompaniment of a great deal of cacophony.

Chuchura is also a district town at a distance of 40 km away from Calcutta and is situated on the western bank of the Hooghly river. The town encompasses 6 square km and contains a large number of tall trees like banyan, mango, peepul. At Chuchura I have found only two roosting sites. The largest roosting congregation of the Common Myna is, however, on a tall banyan tree standing very close to the Chuchura